

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
----- 016710

R 041020Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4399
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
INFO CINCPAC CP SMITH HI
COMUSSAG UKP THAI
CINCPACAF HICKHAM AFB HI
DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 0131

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: IMPACT OF CHANGE OF COMMAND ON KAF PERFORMANCE.

REF: (A) PHNOM PENH (SECRET EXDIS) 13089, 271100Z NOV 73

(B) USDAO (SNFD) 1721, 150830Z DEC 73, PARAS 2H AND 4C

1. REF A REPORTED THE CHANGE OF COMMAND ON KAF FOLLOWING THE AIRSTRIKE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE ON 19 NOVEMBER 73 AND PROVIDED PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF THE ANTICIPATED EFFECT ON KAF PERFORMANCE. REF B REPORTED KAF PERFORMANCE FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, THE AFFECT OF SECURITY MEASURES IMPOSED ON THE AIR FORCE AND PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ON THE IMPACT ON AIR OPERATIONS RESULTING FROM CHANGES IN THE STAFF. BOTH MESSAGES EXPRESSED SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ON THE PART OF THE MISSION FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF KAF PERFORMANCE.

2. CONTRARY TO OUR FEARS KAF HAS SUSTAINED A RESPECTABLE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IN TERMS OF SORTIES FLOWN IN DEC AND IN THE LATTER DAYS DEMONSTRATED THE CONTINUED CAPACITY TO MOUNT A SURGE EFFORT COMPARABLE TO "THURDER-STRIKE I" CONDUCTED IN LATE OCTOBER. THIS LATEST SURGE EFFORT WAS MOUNTED IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS TO REOPEN
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ROUTE 4 AS THE FANK HIGH COMMAND PLACED INCREASING EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO COMPLETE THAT TASK IN THE SHORT-EST POSSIBLE TIME. AS A RESULT OF THIS EFFORT DURING THE LAST SIX DAYS OF DECEMBER KAF MOUNTED A VERY SIGNIFICANT

NUMBER OF STRIKE/FAC SORTIES AND BOOSTED THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF TAC AIR OPNS TO NEW HIGHS SURPASSING THE PREVIOUS HIGH PERFORMANCE OF OCT OF THIS YEAR.

DEC. INCREASE
(OVER OCT.)

A. TOTAL STRIKE/FAC SORTIES.	2,111 (PLUS 560)
B. TOTAL T28D STRIKE SORTIES.	1,110 (PLUS 35)
C. AVERAGE T28D/DAY.	35.8 (-)
D. HELICOPTER GUNSHIP SORTIES MORE THAN TRIPLED PREVIOUS HIGH.	257 (PLUS 175)
E. TOTAL FAC SORTIES	330 (PLUS 106)

3. THE ENCOURAGING PERFORMANCE OF THE KAF THUS FAR CAN PROBABLY BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FOLLOWING:

(A) EMPHASIS BY THE HIGHEST RANKING OFFICERS OF THE HIGH COMMAND OF FANK ON THE REOPENING OF ROUTE 4. THIS EMPHASIS FOCUSED THE AIR ASSETS TOWARD A CLEAR, SINGULAR AND MEANINGFUL OBJECTIVE AS WAS THE CASE WITH THUNDER-STRIKE I.

(B) BG EA CHHONG HAS DEMONSTRATED AN UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND INTEREST IN OPERATIONS. HE HAS HAD FREQUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH MG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AND MG MAO SUM KHEM, ACCOMPANIED THOSE OFFICERS ON VISITS TO THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER ON ROUTE 4 AND PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN THE PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF THE AIR/GROUND EFFORT.

(C) LT. COL. DELOPEZ SANGWAR (PREVIOUSLY G-2 BUT APPOINTED BY EA CHHONG AS G-3) IS OVERCOMING HIS LACK OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF OPERATIONS BY HARD WORK AND FREQUENT CONSULTATION WITH MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSONNEL. HE IS WORKING LONG HOURS AND STAYING ABREAST OF THE CURRENT SITUATION.

(D) THE SYSTEM OF COMMAND AND CONTROL UTILIZING THE KHMER DIRECT AIR SUPPORT CENTER (KDASC) AS THE NERVE
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CENTER FOR TACAIR OPERATIONS HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO FUNCTION. EA CHHONG, WITH THE APPROVAL OF SOSTHENE, RELIEVED LT.COL. NORODOM VATVANI FROM HIS POSITION AS DIRECTOR OF THE DASC AND APPOINTED MAJ. PHLOK SAPHAT AS HIS REPLACEMENT. SAPHAT IS AN INTELLIGENT, KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICER AND HAS DEMONSTRATED WISDOM IN EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE DASC WHOSE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE IN OPERATIONS ARE MORE CURRENT THAN HIS OWN. AS A RESULT, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE KAF OPERATIONS FUNCTION HAVE IMPROVED AND BETTER COORDINATION IS BEING EFFECTED.

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTON ADDED PER MISS ELTZ, S/S-O,1/4/74

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ACTION SS-30

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----- 016452

R 041020Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4400

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JCS WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC CP SMITH HI

COMUSSAG UKP THAI

CINCPACAF HICKHAM AFB HI

DIA WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 0131

EXDIS

(E) LT. COL. SOK SAMBAUR (APPOINTED BASE COMMANDEHKAT POCHENTONG WHEN COL. PAL SAM OR WAS RELIEVED IN LATE OCTOBER) IS A HARD WORKING, KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICER WITH DEMONSTRATED ABILITY AS A PILOT AND COMMANDER AND IS THUS HIGHLY RESPECTED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, PEERS AND SUPERIORS. HE HAS HAD TIME TO TAKE HIS NEW JOB IN HAND AND HAS INTRODUCED SEVERAL CHANGES IN PERSONNEL AND PROCEDURES WHICH HAVE ENHANCED THE OPERATIONS AT THE BASE.

(F) THE NEWLY APPOINTED G-4 OF THE KAF, LT. COL. SO ENG CHUN IS EXTENDING FULL COOPERATION AND COORDINATION TO THE BASE COMMANDER. HE IS A U.S. TRAINED LOGISTICS OFFICER AND APPEARS TO BE RAPIDLY TAKING HOLD IN THE DIFFICULT JOB OF CHIEF KAF LOGISTICIAN.

G. FINALLY A SENSE OF PURPOSE IS BEGINNING TO APPEAR IN THE KAF AS A RESULT OF LEADERSHIP, SOME IMPROVEMENT IN DISCIPLINE AND SUCCESS IN OPERATIONS.

4. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO PREDICT KAF'S CAPABILITY TO SUSTAIN THE DESIRED LEVEL OF OPERATIONS. THE PERFORMANCE DEMONSTRATED IN DECEMBER CLEARLY INDICATES THE CAPACITY, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER KAF WITH ITS
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NARROW MAINTENANCE BASE, AND LACK OF SKILLED PERSONNEL IN THE SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE FUNCTIONS CAN KEEP IT UP.

5. EVENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

AT POCHENTONG HAS BEEN CONTINUOUSLY USED AS AN EXCUSE FOR LOW PERFORMANCE LEVELS. CONDITIONS FOR KAF PERSONNEL AT A PERMANENT BASE LIKE POCHENTONG ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF MANY OTHER COMBAT ELEMENTS OF FANK AND CAN BE EQUATED TO THOSE OF THE MNK AT CHRUI CHUNG WAR NAVAL BASE. CONDITIONS THERE ARE NOT IDEAL BY U.S. STANDARDS BUT HARD WORK AND LEADERSHIP CAN AND HAVE OVERCOME THE SHIBBOLETH. KAF IS NOW FACING UP TO THE PROBLEM AND THE COMMANDER IS DEMANDING AND GETTING RESULTS.

6. OF SIGNIFICANCE IS THE FACT THAT GROUND COMMANDERS

ARE ASKING FOR FAG'S, FAC'S AND INCREASED AIR SUPPORT AND ARE COMPLIMENTARY IN THEIR COMMENTS ABOUT THE EXPANDED LEVEL OF KAF SUPPORT. THE BASC, FSCC, AND TOC ARE NOW CO-LOCATED IN ONE LARGE BUNKER AT EMG HEADQUARTERS AND THIS COORDINATED AIR/GROUND/ARTILLERY EFFORT AT THE HIGH COMMAND LEVEL IS HAVING A BENEFICIAL IMPACT ON OPERATIONS AT THE LOWER ECHELONS.

7. THE PROGNOISIS IS FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT IN KAF.

8. COMMENT: A MAJOR FACTOR IN THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN KAF PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN THE ENCOURAGEMENT, RESOURCEFULNESS AND CATALYSIS SUPPLIED BY OUR AIR ATTACHE (COLONEL OPFER) AND OUR DEPUTY CHIEF OF MEDTC (COLONEL TURNIPSEED).

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MISS ELTZ, S/S-O, 1/4/74.

SECRET

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